

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An endoscope apparatus comprising:

an endoscope including an elongated flexible tube  
having flexibility such that a part of the flexible  
5 tube is inserted in at least an inspection object  
space;

an endoscope apparatus main body connected to the  
endoscope for use; and

a flexible tube holding member which is detachably  
10 attached to the endoscope apparatus main body and  
around which the flexible tube is wound to hold the  
flexible tube.

2. An endoscope apparatus comprising:

an endoscope apparatus main body connected to an  
15 endoscope including an elongated flexible tube having  
flexibility such that a part of the flexible tube is  
inserted in at least an inspection object space;

a flexible tube holding member around which the  
flexible tube is wound to hold the flexible tube; and

20 a storage section which stores the flexible tube  
holding member and which is detachably attached to the  
endoscope apparatus main body.

3. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein the flexible tube comprises a head portion in  
25 which an optical system in an endmost position is  
incorporated, a curved portion capable of being  
bent/operated in a remote manner, and an elongated

flexible tube portion.

4. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2,  
wherein the flexible tube comprises a head portion  
in which an optical system in an endmost position  
5 is incorporated, a curved portion capable of being  
bent/operated in a remote manner, and an elongated  
flexible tube portion.

5. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 3,  
wherein the flexible tube comprises the insertion  
10 portion, further a universal cable which has flexibil-  
ity and which transmits an illuminating light and an  
electric signal, and an intermediate connecting portion  
which connects the insertion portion to the universal  
cable.

15 6. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 4,  
wherein the flexible tube comprises the insertion  
portion, further a universal cable which has flexibil-  
ity and which transmits an illuminating light and an  
electric signal, and an intermediate connecting portion  
20 which connects the insertion portion to the universal  
cable.

7. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 3,  
wherein the flexible tube comprises the insertion  
portion, further a universal cable which has  
25 flexibility and which transmits an illuminating  
light and an electric signal, an operation portion  
which connects the insertion portion to the universal

cable and which controls an operation of the insertion portion, and a monitor portion which displays an image photographed by the head portion by operation of the operation portion and image information.

5           8. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the flexible tube comprises the insertion portion, further a universal cable which has flexibility and which transmits an illuminating light and an electric signal, an operation portion which  
10 connects the insertion portion to the universal cable and which controls an operation of the insertion portion, and a monitor portion which displays an image photographed by the head portion by operation of the operation portion and image information.

15           9. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the storage section is a container which contains the flexible tube holding member.

          10. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the storage section is a support shaft which  
20 detachably supports the flexible tube holding member with respect to the endoscope apparatus main body.

          11. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the flexible tube holding member has a rotatable drum or bobbin shape which rotates  
25 the flexible tube with a defined diameter.

          12. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the flexible tube holding member has a

rotatable drum or bobbin shape which rotates the flexible tube with a defined diameter.

13. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a rotary member around which the flexible tube is wound from a tip side.

14. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a rotary member around which the flexible tube is wound from a tip side.

15. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a rotary member around which the flexible tube is wound from a root side connected to the apparatus main body.

16. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a rotary member around which the flexible tube is wound from a root side connected to the apparatus main body.

17. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a first fitting portion which is capable of engaging with and storing the intermediate connecting portion connecting the insertion portion to the universal cable and which has a concave shape.

18. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a first fitting portion which is capable of engaging

with and storing the intermediate connecting portion connecting the insertion portion to the universal cable and which has a concave shape.

19. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 7,  
5 wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a second fitting portion which is capable of engaging with and storing the operation portion connecting the insertion portion to the universal cable and the intermediate connecting portion including the monitor  
10 portion.

20. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 8,  
wherein the flexible tube holding member comprises a second fitting portion which is capable of engaging with and storing the operation portion connecting the  
15 insertion portion to the universal cable and the intermediate connecting portion including the monitor portion.

21. The endoscope apparatus according to claim 2,  
wherein the storage section comprises an engagement  
20 portion which engages with the flexible tube and engages with the endoscope apparatus main body and is integrally movable.